



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 8

CHINDWIN AND UPPER IRRAWADDY

20 NIGHTS

The scenery on this river cruise is spectacular and we are welcomed with astonishment by the many remote communities through which we passed. Achieving our goal of Homalin, over 600 miles from the Chindwin's confluence with the Irrawaddy, we return downstream all the way to the ancient city of Pagan just below the confluence. Then we continued a further 700 miles up the Irrawaddy past Mandalay to the great 2nd Defile, just short of the out of bounds city of Bhamo. This is the most northerly navigable point on the Irrawaddy and gateway to China.

Twenty nights on a river cruise may seem a long time, but the majority of our passengers on these expeditions are regular Pandaw passengers, and happy to spend so long in the convivial atmosphere of a Pandaw. No two days are the same with varied scenery and diverse cultural sites. This expedition is the most popular of all our cruises and as we only run one a year tends to book out quite early.

Note this expedition takes place during the Southeast Asia monsoon season which is the only time we have sufficient water levels to attempt these remote rivers. It may rain but not continuously. River banks may be muddy and slippery. This is a real expedition and the itinerary subject to sudden changes due to water levels or other local conditions.

Cruise Price Includes: Flight from Rangoon to Kalembo Entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes.

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and tips to tour guides, local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers.

DOWNSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

RANGOON - KALEMYO

Morning flight Rangoon to Kalemmyo, the gateway town for the Chin State. We explore Kalewa with its markets and quaint wooden architecture.

[MORE ABOUT KALEMYO](#)

DAY 2

KALEWA

Stop for morning walk at Balet, a charming and typical river community.

[MORE ABOUT KALEWA](#)

DAY 3

KINDAT

Kindat was as far as the old IFC steamers ventured outside of the Monsoon season. This part of the Chindwin valley is very sparsely populated and villages are few and far between.

[MORE ABOUT KINDAT](#)

DAY 4

SITTHAUNG

We pass the mouth of the Yu River which drains the Kubu valley. Sitthaung was the final resting place of a number of IFC steamers scuppered there in 1942.

[MORE ABOUT SITTHAUNG](#)

DAY 5

TOUNGDOOT

Toungdoot, or Hswang-hsup in Tain, is an ancient Shan enclave which in British times still had a ruling prince or sawbwa complete with palace and court.

[MORE ABOUT TOUNGDOOT](#)

DAY 6

HOMALIN

We pass the Uyu River worked by gold washers on the way to Homalin, the furthest navigable point on the Chindwin for vessels of our size.

[MORE ABOUT HOMALIN](#)

DAY 7

MAWLAIK

Mawlaik replaced Kindat as the administrative capital. Like other towns of the Upper Chindwin, they can only be reached by boat so cars are few.

[MORE ABOUT MAWLAIK](#)

DAY 8

MINGKIN

Mingkin features Konbaung court style teak monasteries which are sumptuously decorated. Mingkin may be described as the Luang Prabang of the Chindwin.

[MORE ABOUT MINGKIN](#)

DAY 9

MONYWA

Entering the Lower Chindwin where the river widens and the forested hills fall away to farmland, we pass a number of attractive villages. We will explore Monywa and time permitting make a quick trip to the Thanbodi Temple with its million Buddha images.

[MORE ABOUT MONYWA](#)

DAY 10**CRUISING**

Cruise all day to the great Lower Chindwin plain.

DAY 11**PAGAN**

Tour a selection of the most significant of the 3,000 Buddhist monuments found at this World Heritage Site. We will visit lacquerware manufacturers. Sail in the afternoon and evening walk in Oh Ne Kyaung village to see the local life in this typical river side community.

[MORE ABOUT PAGAN](#)

DAY 12**YANDABO**

We head upstream to the Chindwin confluence and stop in the evening at Yandabo. Here we visit the Pandaw School built with donations from past Pandaw passengers.

[MORE ABOUT YANDABO](#)

DAY 13

AVA

In the morning we travel to Ava and explore the ruins, visiting Bagaya Kyaung, a 200 year old royal monastery made of teak with elaborate wood carvings.

In the afternoon we travel to Mandalay for an orientation tour of the city area visiting the Mahamuni Pagoda and sunset at Amarapura U-Bein Bridge.

[MORE ABOUT AVA](#)

DAY 14

MINGUN

We cast off early and stop at Mingun to see the largest working bell in the world and the unfinished pagoda that is the largest single mass of brick building in the world. We also visit the Mingun Old People's Home originally established with the assistance of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company in the 1930s.

[MORE ABOUT MINGUN](#)

DAY 15

KYAUK-MYOUNG

Visit the spectacular potteries near Kyauk-Myoung. We enter the Third Defile and sail upstream all day stopping at Khan-nyat village with its many Buddhist monasteries and an orphanage we support.

[MORE ABOUT KYAUK-MYOUNG](#)

DAY 16

TAGAUNG

Explore by foot the ancient city of Tagaung viewing the fortifications. In the evening we climb the Pagoda Hill at Tigyang with its stunning views of the Irrawaddy.

[MORE ABOUT TAGAUNG](#)

DAY 17

KATHA

We reach the enchanting colonial town of Katha, setting for George Orwell's Myanma Days. Katha was the final resting place of the old flotilla and here over a hundred ships were scuppered in 1942.

[MORE ABOUT KATHA](#)

DAY 18

SHWEGU

We continue upstream to Shwegu and Kyun-daw, a midstream island of monasteries and countless small pagodas. Cruise through the 2nd Defile, the most dramatic of the three gorges, with cliffs towering over the narrow channel.

[MORE ABOUT SHWEGU](#)

DAY 19

INN-YWA

Delightful walk through some of the oldest wooden village houses in Burma.

[MORE ABOUT INN YWA](#)

DAY 20

KHANYAT

Visit a Buddhist orphanage and the grave of an English officer assassinated here during the Pacification of Burma (1887).

[MORE ABOUT KHANYAT](#)

DAY 21

MANDALAY

Disembark the ship in Mandalay.

STATEROOM

The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are very spacious at 168 square feet (15.6 sqm). Much loved by all our passengers we have ensured that with each ship we build the stateroom remains the same. Our cabins do not have mini-bars, satellite TV's, internet or phones. Pandaw passengers usually want to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

Many passengers describe life on board a Pandaw more like being a guest on a private motor yacht than a cruise ship. Where we go and what we see is intrepid in extreme. What you come back to is a floating base of discreet comfort, caring service and all the good things one looks for in life. All our cabins have the same size and Pandaw signature amenities. Choose from Main Deck, Upper Deck or Premium Upper Deck (Mekong only).

Special to Your Stateroom

- Fruit and flowers on arrival
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water

River Conditions Warning!

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience - not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

Useful Links

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[General Information & Life on Board](#)

[Visa Information](#)